

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 091083
ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-02 IO-14 /070 R

DRAFTED BY ARA:SWILKINSON:LJ
APPROVED BY ARA:SWILKINSON
-----064701 082200Z /65
O 082116Z APR 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 091083

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PN

SUBJECT: ARTICLE APPEARING IN WASHINGTON POST - APRIL 8,
1978

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF AN ARTICLE APPEARING IN THE
WASHINGTON POST ON APRIL 8, 1978:

QUOTE:

SEVERAL KEY SENATORS INCLUDING IMPORTANT BACKERS OF THE
PANAMA CANAL TREATIES ARE LIKELY TO DEMAND A CLARIFICATION
OF PANAMA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD A KEY AMENDMENT TO THE FIRST
CANAL TREATY, SENATE SOURCES SAID YESTERDAY.

THIS DEMAND COULD POSE A NEW AND POTENTIALLY SERIOUS
SENATE OBSTACLE TO THE TREATIES.

THE AMENDMENT IN QUESTION IS A "RESERVATION" TO THE FIRST
TREATY -- ALREADY APPROVED BY THE SENATE -- THAT ASSERTS
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 091083

AMERICA'S RIGHT TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IN PANAMA AFTER
THE YEAR 2000 TO KEEP THE CANAL OPEN.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA ISSUED A FORMAL STATEMENT DENYING
THAT IT HAS ALREADY REJECTED THE RESERVATION. THIS WAS A

RESPONSE TO PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT THE RESERVATION HAD

SO ANGERED THE PANAMANIAN THAT THEY COULD NOT STOMACH IT.

DESPITE PANAMA'S DENIAL, RELIABLE SOURCES SAID SEVERAL KEY SENATORS WERE WORRIED AND ANGERED ABOUT MESSAGES PANAMA HAS SENT TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS NOTING THE RESERVATION WITH OBVIOUS DISAPPROVAL. ONE OF THESE MESSAGES, A LETTER SIGNED BY PANAMA'S LEADER, GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS, SUGGESTED THAT THE RESERVATION VIOLATED THE CHARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

NEWS OF THESE MESSAGES CIRCULATED IN WASHINGTON FOR THE FIRST TIME THURSDAY. YESTERDAY KEY SENATE AIDES SAID PANAMA'S DENIAL THAT IT HAD ALREADY REJECTED THE RESERVATION -- KNOWN AS THE DECONCINI RESERVATION FOR SEN. DENNIS DECONCINI, THE ARIZONA DEMOCRAT WHO INTRODUCED IT -- WOULD NOT ALLAY DOUBTS ABOUT TORRIJOS' TRUE INTENTIONS.

SOME SOURCES, INCLUDING AN AIDE TO DECONCINI, SUGGESTED THAT HE OR OTHER SENATORS MIGHT DEMAND THAT TORRIJOS PUBLICLY EMBRACE THE DECONCINI AMENDMENT BEFORE AGREEING TO VOTE FOR THE SECOND CANAL TREATY, WHICH WILL BE UP FOR FINAL VOTE ON APRIL 18.

U.S. DIPLOMATS AND PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS HAVE SAID IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR TORRIJOS TO PUBLICLY ENDORSE THE RESERVATION.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 091083

WASHINGTON POST SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MARLISE SIMONS REPORTED FROM PANAMA CITY LAST NIGHT THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THERE INSISTED THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF REJECTING THE TREATY BECAUSE OF THE DECONCINI RESERVATION.

SIMONS SAID ONE SENIOR PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL TOLD HER THAT THE TORRIJOS GOVERNMENT WAS SPLIT OVER THE MESSAGES RAISING DOUBTS ABOUT THE RESERVATION. THAT OFFICIAL PERSONALLY OPPOSED SENDING THE MESSAGES, SHE REPORTED.

SIMONS ALSO REPORTED THAT POLITICAL TENSIONS IN PANAMA ARE HIGH, AND SEVERAL OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE PREPARING TO PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT TO REJECT THE TREATIES BECAUSE OF THE DECONCINI RESERVATION.

PANAMA'S DENIAL THAT IT HAD REJECTED THE DECONCINI RESERVATION WAS BEING CIRCULATED BY CARTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS YESTERDAY, AND IN INTERVIEWS SEVERAL SAID THEY THOUGHT THE FLAP HAD QUICKLY PASSED.

BUT SENATE EMOTION SEEMED MUCH STRONGER. ONE INDICA-

TION WAS A PUBLIC STATEMENT THURSDAY NIGHT BY HOWARD H. BAKER JR. (R-TENN), THE MINORITY LEADER AND A KEY BACKER OF THE PANAMA TREATIES:

"I'VE REALLY GONE OUT ON A LIMB FOR THESE TREATIES BECAUSE I THOUGHT THEY WERE RIGHT FOR MY COUNTRY, AND I STILL THINK THAT. BUT, I THINK THAT OUR FRIENDS IN PANAMA OUGHT TO KNOW THAT JUST A TWITCH OF AN EYELID, JUST THE SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION OR EXPRESSION THAT THESE TREATIES, OR THIS TREATY IN THIS FORM, IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO PANAMA, AND THIS WHOLE THING COULD GO DOWN THE TUBE."

OTHER SENATORS WHO VOTED FOR THE FIRST TREATY GUARANTEEING THE FUTURE NEUTRALITY OF THE CANAL SAID YESTERDAY THAT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 091083

THE SENATE WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY DILUTION OF THE DECONCINI RESERVATION.

FRANK CHURCH (D-IDAHO), FLOOR MANAGER FOR THE TREATIES, SAID HE HAD TOLD PANAMA'S AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON THAT THE SENATE "WOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY ACTION DESIGNED TO SUBVERT THE DECONCINI AMENDMENT."

SEN. SAM NUNN (D-GA.) SAID ANY ATTEMPT TO UNDERCUT THE RESERVATION WOULD, IN HIS OPINION, "KILL THE TREATY."

TREATY OPPONENTS JUMPED ON THE PANAMANIAN MESSAGES RAISING DOUBTS ABOUT THE DECONCINI RESERVATION AS PROOF OF BAD FAITH, SEN. BOB DOLE (R-KAN.), FOR EXAMPLE, SAID THE STEP SHOWED THAT PANAMA WOULD NOT ABIDE BY THE TREATIES, SO THEY SHOULD BE REJECTED BY THE SENATE.

ONE SENATE AIDE NOTED THAT BY INFLAMING SENATORIAL OPINION, TORRIJOS MAY HAVE OBLIGATED HIMSELF TO EMBRACE THE POLITICALLY PAINFUL DECONCINI RESERVATION TO ASSURE SENATE PASSAGE OF THE SECOND TREATY, WHEREAS IF HE HAD SAID NOTHING, NO PUBLIC EMBRACE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEMANDED.

HOWEVER, CORRESPONDENT SIMONS REPORTED FROM PANAMA CITY THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND PERHAPS POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR TORRIJOS TO PUBLICLY ENDORSE THE DECONCINI RESERVATION NOW.

ANOTHER SENATE AIDE SAID HIS BOSS AND OTHER MEMBERS WERE WORRIED THAT TORRIJOS MIGHT TRY TO GO TO THE U.N. AFTER THE NEW TREATIES ARE RATIFIED AND ARGUE THERE THAT THE DECONCINI RESERVATION VIOLATED THE U.N. CHARACTER (SIC.), AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED VOID. OTHER UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 091083

COUNTRIES MIGHT GO ALONG WITH THAT VIEW, THIS AIDE SUGGESTED. THIS RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT TORRIJOS WAS THINKING OF TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE SENATE OR "MAKE IT LOOK RIDICULOUS," THIS AIDE SAID.

SEVERAL SENATORS AND AIDES CONTACTED ON THIS MATTER LAST NIGHT WOULD NOT AGREE TO BE QUOTED BY NAME, SAYING IT WAS A SENSITIVE MOMENT AND THEY WANTED TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT.

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE WARREN M. CHRISTOPHER WENT TO DECONCINI'S OFFICE YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS A RESERVATION THE SENATOR HAS DRAFTED TO THE SECOND TREATY, WHICH SPELLS OUT TERMS OF THE TRANSFER OF THE CANAL TO PANAMA BY 2000.

THIS RESERVATION, TOO, COULD UPSET PANAMA. IT SAYS THE UNITED STATES RETAINS THE RIGHT TO ACT MILITARILY ON ITS OWN IN PANAMA UNTIL THE YEAR 2000, WITHOUT SUBJECTING ITSELF TO PANAMANIAN VETO IN A JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION ENVISIONED BY THE TREATY.

ON THE FLOOR YESTERDAY, THE SENATE REJECTED 40-33, AN AMENDMENT TO THE SECOND TREATY OFFERED BY DEWEY BARTLETT (R-OKLA.) THAT WOULD LIMIT U.S. LIABILITY FOR CASH PAYMENTS TO PANAMA. THE SENATE IS EXPECTED TO ENACT A RESERVATION TO THE TREATY COVERING THE SAME POINT, BUT TREATY BACKERS AND THE ADMINISTRATION OPPOSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE ACTUAL TEXT. VANCE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC ATTITUDES, THE PRESS, AMENDMENTS, CANALS, TREATYMAKING POWER
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE091083
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SWILKINSON:LJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-0177
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780477/aaaacnic.tel
Line Count: 205
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f3a7aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3027846
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARTICLE APPEARING IN WASHINGTON POST - APRIL 8, 1978 THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF AN ARTICLE APPEARING
TAGS: SOPN, PGOV, PINT, PN, US, WASHINGTON POST
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f3a7aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014